



"The Big Water Debate"

Thursday 11th February 2009

5.30 for a 6.00 PM start

Allan Scott Auditorium, [UniSA City West campus](#),

Hawke Building, 50 North Terrace, Adelaide

Hawke Centre FREE public forum

RSVP essential via [Hawke Centre web site](#) or phone (08) 8302 0215

Keynote address by Professor Ian Lowe, President of the Australian Conservation Foundation
"The truth and lies about water politics"

A sustainable Water Future without compromising the health of interdependent ecosystems is a critical issue for our state and our nation.

Water security is critical to business, agriculture and the quality of our lifestyle and our water future is of significant concern to the South Australian electorate – whether country, regional or city-based. It will be a major policy issue at the forthcoming State election.

Invitations have gone out to major and minor political parties to outline their policies in a debate format and an open question time will be provided afterwards.

Highly respected [Professor Ian Lowe](#), President of the Australian Conservation Foundation will commence proceedings with his address: "*The Truth & Lies About Water Politics*".

Water is essential for life. Discussion of water needs to take account of some fundamental truths: South Australia is the driest State of the driest inhabited continent. We also have more variable rainfall than other continents. Both rainfall patterns and subsequent run-off are being altered significantly by climate change. The lower Murray is now in a crisis state as a result of over-extraction of water upstream. People understand these truths and expect serious discussion of water issues in the run-up to the State election.

The water is muddied by some frequently-repeated lies: the Murray is in crisis because of Adelaide's water use, irrigation water is used efficiently to maximise economic benefits, we are doing all that is reasonable to manage demand and to harvest storm-water, we need desalination and its impacts are minor, privatisation of water is beneficial, all the problems would be solved if the issue was taken over by the Commonwealth government, climate change is not a serious threat. There are also some half-truths: other States are to blame, there is now an effective plan to manage the Murray-Darling system.

About [Water Action Coalition](#): WAC is a broadly based movement of community groups and environmental organisations seeking an informed and constructive debate on our water future. WAC seeks policies to secure a sustainable supply of water, without compromising the health of interdependent ecosystems, with the goal that these be implemented by the incoming SA Government and sustained by future governments for the benefit of all.

Jointly presented by the [Water Action Coalition](#) and [The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre](#)

